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MISSISSIPPI NOTEBOOK

By TOM ETHRIDGE

May 19, 1964



Save Historic Coast Fort, Yes, But Why Can't We Give It Better Name?

A LETTER has reached us from a prominent business leader on the Mississippi Coast, suggesting a statewide fund-raising campaign to save historic Fort Massachusetts 12 miles offshore on Ship Island in the Gulf of Mexico.

Storms and tides over the years have eaten away the island's sandy beaches around the fort. As stated by the Dixie Guide, "Unless something is done to correct the situation, the gallant old fortress will go down like a good ship into the beautiful waters that surround it."

The last federal garrison was withdrawn from Fort Massachusetts in 1875, ten years after the Civil War. The local American Legion purchased the abandoned facility in 1935.

Its present management obviously can't afford the expensive restoration and protective program needed to save the island and fort from a watery grave. A public movement seems justified and in order.

THIS CORNER favors the statewide fund-raising campaign suggested by our esteemed Coast correspondent. Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts are valuable tourist and historic assets worth many times the cost of restoration and preservation efforts.

However, if Mississippians are to provide such funds, this writer feels it would be in order to think about changing the fort's name—especially since Massachusetts leadership has been so vigorously hostile to our state and people now and in years past.

The late President Kennedy sent federal troops into our state with enough firepower to wipe out the entire population. His brother Bobby is Public Enemy Number One in these parts. Brer Teddy is busily upholding the family tradition of bootlicking "civil rights" groups that demand a Second Reconstruction in Dixie.